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POSTSCRIPT

TO

THE SECOND EDITION OF

MR. ROBISON'S

(John)
7
PROOFS OF A CONSPIRACY

AGAINST ALL THE

RELIGIONS AND GOVERNMENTS

OF

E U R O P E,

CARRIED ON

IN THE SECRET MEETINGS OF

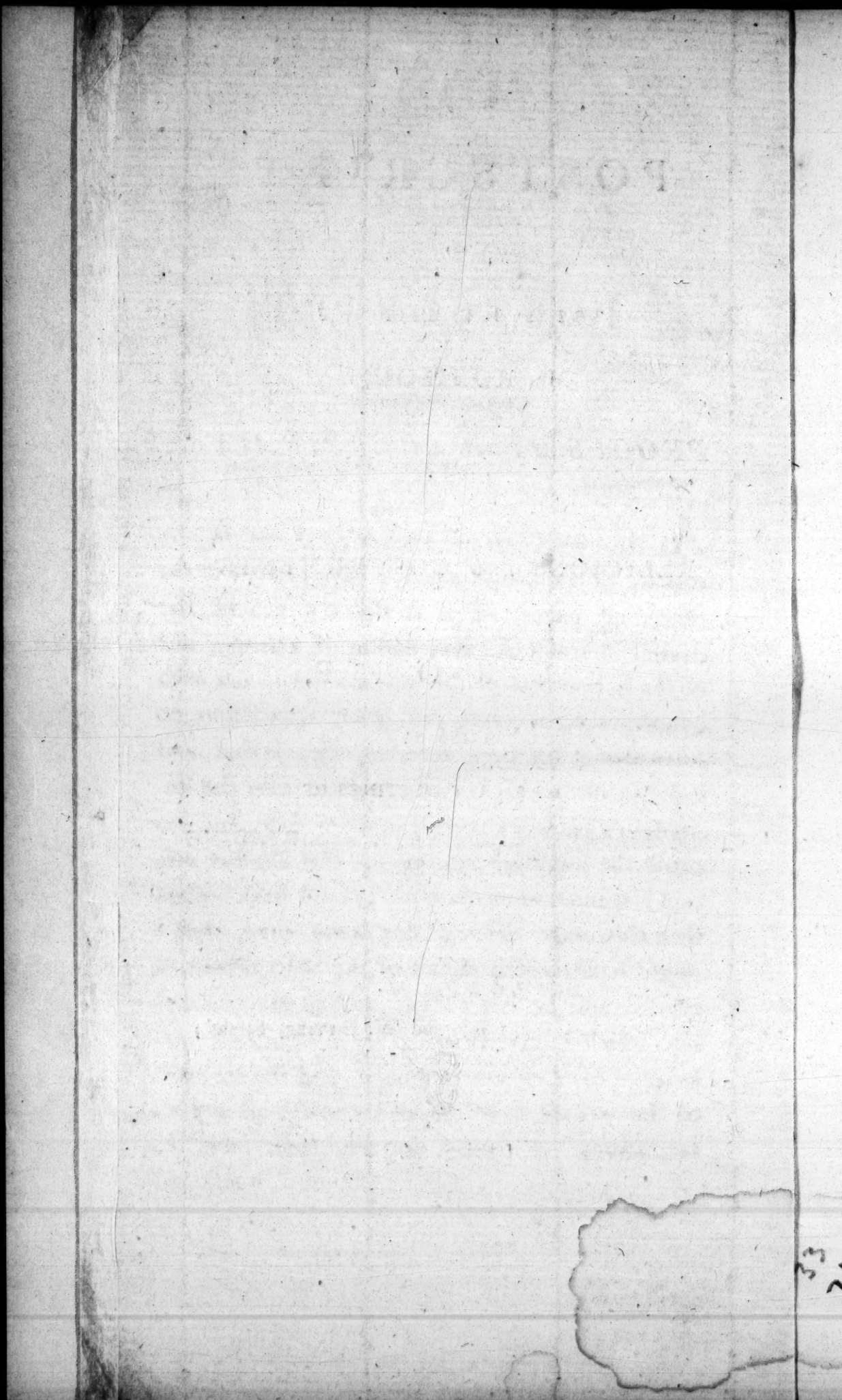
FREE MASONS, ILLUMINATI, AND READING
SOCIETIES.

L O N D O N,

Printed for T. CABELL jun. and W. DAVIES, Strand;
and W. CREECH, Edinburgh.

1797.

[Price 6d.]



P O S T S C R I P T.

ALTHOUGH I saw no reason to doubt of the validity of the proofs which I have offered in the preceding pages, of a conspiracy against the dearest interests of every nation of Europe, nor of the importance of the information to my own countrymen, it gives me great satisfaction to learn that it has been received with favour and indulgence. This I may conclude from the impression's being exhausted in a few days, and because the publisher informs me that another edition is wanted immediately. I could have wished that this were deferred for some time, that I might have availed myself of the observations of others, and be enabled to correct the mistakes into which I have been led by my scanty knowledge of the German language, and the mistakes of the writers from whom I derived all my informations. I should, in that case, have attempted

tempted to make the work more worthy of the public eye, by correcting many imperfections, which the continual distraction of bad health, and my haste to bring it before the public, have occasioned. I should have made the disposition more natural and perspicuous, and have lopped off some redundances and repetitions. But the printer tells me, that this would greatly retard the publication, by changing the series of the pages. At any rate, I am not at present in a condition to engage in any work that requires dispatch. I must yield therefore to those reasons, and content myself with such corrections as can be made immediately.

I have found, after minute enquiry, that I was mistaken as to the expression of an eminent follower of Dr. Priestley, mentioned in p. 485. The person alluded to disclaims all sanguinary proceedings, and my information arose from a very erroneous account which was circulated of the conversation. But I still think the caution equally necessary, which I recommended to the hearers of the frequent and violent declamations made by those alluded to against all religious establishments.

Except the anecdote of Diderot's library, I do not recollect another assertion in the book, for which I have not the authority of printed evidence. This story was told me by so many persons



sons of credit, who were on the spot at the time, that I have no doubt of its truth.

I also find that I was mistaken in my conjecture that Mr. *Le Franc* (see p. 383) communicated his suspicions of the horrid designs of the Free Masons to Archbishop *Gobet*. It must have been to Mr. *Le Clerc de Juigné*, a most worthy prelate, whom the hatred of the Jacobins obliged to fly into Switzerland. The Catholic clergy were butchered or banished, and the Jacobins substituted in their places such as would second their views. *Gobet* was worthy of their confidence, and the *Archbishop of Thoulouse (Brienne)* himself could not have served the cause of the philosophers more effectually, had they succeeded in their attempts to get him continued Archbishop of Paris.

As the poetical picture of unqualified Liberty and Equality, and the indolent pleasures of the patriarchal life, are the charm by which the Illuminators hope to fascinate all hearts, and as they reprobate every construction of society which tolerates any permanent subordination, and particularly such as found this subordination on distinctions of ranks, and scout all privileges allowed to particular orders of men, I hope that it will not be thought foreign to the general purpose of the foregoing Work, if I, with great deference, lay before the Reader some of my rea-

sons for asserting, without hesitation, in page 444, that the British constitution is the only one that will give permanent happiness to a great and luxurious nation, and is peculiarly calculated to give full exercise to the best propensities of cultivated minds. I am the more desirous of doing this, because it seems to me that most of the political writers on the Continent, and many of my countrymen, have not attended to important circumstances which distinguish our constitution from the States General of France and other countries. The republicans in France have, since the Revolution, employed the pains in searching their records, which ought to have been taken before the convocation of the States, and which would probably have prevented that step altogether. They have shewn that the meetings of the States, if we except that in 1614 and 1483, were uniformly occasions of mutual contest between the different Orders, in which the interests of the nation and the authority of the Crown were equally forgotten, and the kingdom was plunged into all the horrors of a rancorous civil war. Of this they give us a remarkable instance during the captivity of King John in 1355 and 1356, the horrors of which were hardly exceeded by any thing that has happened in our days. They have shewn the same dismal consequences of the assembly of the different Orders in Brabant; and
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still more remarkably in Sweden and Denmark, where they have frequently produced a revolution and change of government, all of which have terminated in the absolute government, either of the Crown, or of one of the contending Orders. They laugh at the simplicity of the British for expecting that the permanent fruits of our constitution, which is founded on the same jarring principles, shall be any better; and assert, that the peaceable exercise of its several powers for somewhat more than a century, (a thing never experienced by us in former times,) has proceeded from circumstances merely accidental. With much address they have selected the former disturbances, and have connected them by a sort of principle, so as to support their system, "that
 " a States General or Parliament, consisting of
 " a representation of the different classes of citizens, can never deliberate for the general
 " good, but must always occupy their time in
 " contentions about their mutual invasions of
 " privilege, and will saddle every aid to the executive power, with some unjust and ruinous
 " aggrandisement of the victorious Order." They have the effrontery to give the MAGNA CHARTA as an instance of an usurpation of the great feudatories, and have represented it in such a light as to make it the game of their writers and of the tribunes.—All this they have done

in order to reconcile the minds of the few thinking men of the nation to the abolition of the different Orders of the State, and to their National Convention in the form of a chaotic mass of Frenchmen, one and indivisible:

*Non bene junctarum discordia semina rerum,
Ubi frigida pugnabant calidis, humentia siccis,
Mollia cum duris, sine pondere habentia pondus.*

Their reasonings would be just, and their proofs from history would be convincing, if their premises were true; if the British Parliament were really an assembly of three Orders, either personally, or by representation, deliberating apart, each having a *veto* on the decisions of the other two. And I apprehend that most of my countrymen, who have not had occasion to canvass the subject with much attention, suppose this to be really the British constitution: for, in the ordinary table conversations on the subject, they seldom go farther, and talk with great complacency of the balance of hostile Powers, of the King as the umpire of differences, and of the peace and prosperity that results from the whole.

But I cannot help thinking that this is a misconception, almost in every circumstance. I do not know any opposite interests in the State, except the general one of the governor and the governed, the king and the subject.—If there is

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an umpire in our constitution, it is the House of Lords—but this is not as a representation of the persons of birth, but as a court of hereditary magistrates: the Peers do not meet to defend their own privileges as citizens, but either as the counsellors of the King, or as judges in the last resort. The privileges for which we see them sometimes contend, are not the privileges of the high-born, of the great vassals of the Crown, but the privileges of the House of Lords, of the supreme Court of Judicature, or of the King's Council. In all the nations on the Continent, the different Orders, as they are called, of the State, are corporations, bodies politic, which have jurisdiction within themselves, and rights which they can maintain at their own hand, and privileges which mark them most distinctly, and produce such a complete separation between the different Orders, that they can no more mix than oil and water. Yet the great president Montesquieu says, that the Peerage of England is a *body* of Nobility; and he uses the term *body* in the strict sense now mentioned, as synonymous to corporation. He has repeatedly used this term to denote the second order of Frenchmen, persons of noble birth, or ennobled, (that is, vested in the privileges and distinctions of the nobly born,) united by law, and having authority to maintain their privileges. The history of France, nay of
our

our own country, shows us that this body may enjoy all its distinctions of nobility, and that the Great Barons may enjoy the prerogatives of their baronies, although the authority of the Crown is almost annihilated.—We have no cogent reason, therefore, for thinking that they will be constantly careful to support the authority of the Crown; and much less to believe that they will, at the same time, watch over the liberties of the people. In the election of their representatives, (for the whole body of the gentlemen must appear by representation,) we must not expect that they will select such of their own number as will take care of those two essential objects of our constitution.—Equally jealous of the authority of the Crown and of the encroachments of all those who are not gentlemen, and even fearful of the assumptions of the Great Barons, the powerful individuals of their own order, they will always choose such representatives as will defend their own rights in the first place. Such persons are by no means fit for maintaining the proper authority of the Crown, and keeping the representatives of the lower classes within proper bounds.

But this is not the nature of our House of Lords in the present day. It was so formerly in a great measure, and had the same effects as in other countries. But since the Revolution, the Peers of Great Britain have no important privileges

leges which relate merely or chiefly to birth. These all refer to their functions as Magistrates of the Supreme Court. The King can, at any time, place in this House any eminent person whom he thinks worthy of the office of hereditary magistrate. The Peers are noble—that is, remarkable, illustrious; but are not necessarily, nor in every instance, persons of high birth. This House therefore is not, in any sort, the representative of what is called in France the Noblesse—a particular cast of the nation;—nor is it a junction of the proprietors of the great fees of the Crown, as such;—for many, very many, of the greatest baronies are in the hands of those we call Commoners.—They sit as the King's Counsellors, or as Judges.—Therefore the members of our Upper House are not swayed by the prejudices of any class of the citizens. They are hereditary magistrates, created by the Sovereign, for his counsel, to defend his prerogatives, to hold the balance between the throne and the people. The greatest part of the Nobility (in the continental sense of the word) are not called into this House, but they may be members of the Lower House, which we call the Commons; nay the sons and the brothers of the Peers are in the same situation. The Peers therefore cannot be hostile or indifferent to the liberty, the rights, or the

the happiness of the Commons, without being the enemies of their own families.

Nor is our House of Commons at all similar to the *Third Estate* of any of the neighbouring kingdoms. They are not the representatives of the ignobly born, or of any class of citizens. The members are the proper representatives of the *whole nation*, and consist of persons of every class, persons of the highest birth, persons of great fortune, persons of education, of knowledge, of talents.

Thus the causes of dissension which refer to the distinctive rights or prerogatives of the different classes of citizens are removed, because in each House there are many individuals selected from all the classes.

A Peer, having attained the highest honours of the state, must be an enemy to every revolution. Revolution must certainly degrade him, whether it places an absolute monarch, or a democratic junto, on the throne.

The Sovereign naturally looks for the support of the Upper House, and in every measure agreeable to the constitution, and to the public weal, exerts his influence on the House of Commons. Here the character of the monarch and his choice of ministers must appear, as in any other constitution; but with much less chance of danger to political liberty.—The great engine
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of monarchy in Europe has been the jarring privileges of the different Orders ; and the Sovereign, by siding with one of them, obtained accessions of prerogative and power.—It was thus that, under the house of Tudor, our constitution advanced with hasty strides to absolute monarchy ; and would have attained it, had James the First been as able as he was willing to secure what he firmly believed to be the divine rights of his Crown.

I do not recollect hearing the lower ranks of the State venting much of their discontents against the Peers, and they seem to perceive pretty clearly the advantages arising from their prerogatives. They seem to look up to them as the first who will protect them against the agents of sovereignty. They know that a man may rise from the lowest station to the peerage, and that in that exaltation he remains connected with themselves by the dearest ties ; and the House of Commons take no offence at the creation of new Peers, because their privileges as a Court, and their private rights, are not affected by it. Accordingly, the House has always opposed every project of limiting the King's prerogative in this respect.

How unlike is all this to the constitution consisting of the pure representatives of the Privileged Orders of the Continental States. The self-conceited

ceited constitutionalists of France saw something in the British Parliament which did not fall in with their own *hasty* notions, and prided themselves in not copying from us. This would have indicated great poverty of invention in a nation accustomed to consider itself as the teacher of mankind. The most sensible of them, however, wished to have a constitution which they called an *improvement* of ours: and this was the simple plan of a *representation* of the two or three Orders of the State. Their Upper House should contain the representatives of 100,000 noblesse. The Princes of the Blood and Great Barons should sit in it of their own right, and the rest by deputies. The Lower House, or *Tiers Etat*, should consist of deputies from those ignobly born; such as merchants, persons in the lower offices of the law, artisans, peasants, and a small number of freeholders. Surely it needs no deep reflection to teach us what sort of deliberations would occupy such a house. It would be a most useful occupation, however, to peruse the history of France, and of other nations, and see what *really did occupy* the *Tiers Etat* thus constructed, and what were their proceedings, their decisions, and the steps which they took to make them effectual. I have no doubt but that this study would cure most of our advocates for general eligibility, and for general suffrage. I have lately
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read Velley and Villaret's History of France, (by the bye, the Abbé Barruel has shewn that the Club d'Holbach managed the publication of this History after the first eight or ten volumes, and slipped into it many things suited to their impious project,) and the accounts of the troublesome reigns of John, and Charles his successor, by authors who wrote long before the Revolution; and they filled me with horror. The only instance that I meet with of any thing like moderation in the claims and disputes of the different Orders of their States General, and of patriotism, or regard for the general interests of the State, is in their meetings during the minority of Charles VIII.

With respect to the limitations of the eligibility into the House of Commons, I think that there can be no doubt that those should be excluded whose habits of needy and laborious life have precluded them from all opportunities of acquiring some general views of political relations. Such persons are totally unfit for deliberations, where general or comprehensive views only are to be the subjects of discussion; they can have no conceptions of the subject, and therefore no steady notions or opinions, but must change them after every speaker, and must become the dupes of every demagogue.

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But there are other circumstances which make me think that, of all the classes of citizens, the land proprietors are the fittest for holding this important office. I do not infer this from their having a more real connection with the nation, and a stronger interest in its fate—I prefer them on account of their general habits of thought. Almost all their ordinary transactions are such as make them acquainted with the interests of others, cause them to consider those in general points of view; and, in short, most of their occupations are, in some degree, national. They are accustomed to settle differences between those of lower stations—they are frequently in the King's commission as Justices of the Peace. All these circumstances make them much apter scholars in that political knowledge, which is absolutely necessary for a member of the House of Commons. But, besides this, I have no hesitation in saying that their turn of mind, their principles of conduct, are more generally such as become a Senator, than those of *any other class* of men. This class includes almost all men of family. I cannot help thinking that even what is called family pride is a sentiment in their favour. I am convinced that all our propensities are useful in society, and that their bad effects arise wholly from want of moderation

tion in the indulgence of them, or sometimes from the impropriety of the occasion on which they are exerted. What propensity is more general than the desire of acquiring permanent consideration for ourselves and our families? Where is the man to be found so mean-spirited as not to value himself for being born of creditable parents, and for creditable domestic connections? Is this wrong because it has been abused? So then is every pre-eminence of office; and the directors of republican France are as criminal as her former Nobles. This propensity of the human heart should no more be rejected than the desire of power. It should be regulated—but it should certainly be made use of as one of the means of carrying on the national business. I think that we know some of its good effects—It incites to a certain propriety of conduct that is generally agreeable—its honesty is embellished by a manner that makes it more pleasing. There is something that we call the *behaviour of a Gentleman* that is immediately and uniformly understood. The plainest peasant or labourer will say of a man whom he esteems in a certain way, “He is a Gentleman, every bit of him,”—and he is perfectly understood by all who hear him to mean, not a rank in life, but a turn of mind, a tenor of conduct that is amiable and worthy, and the ground of confidence.

dence.—I remark, with some feeling of patriotic pride, that these are phrases almost peculiar to our language—in Russia the words would have no meaning. But there, the Sovereign is a despot, and all but the Gentry are slaves; and the Gentry are at no pains to recommend their class by such a distinction, nor to give currency to such a phrase.—I would infer from this peculiarity, that Britain is the happy land, where the wisest use has been made of this propensity of the human heart.

If therefore there be a foundation for this peculiarity, the Gentry are proper objects of our choice for filling the House of Commons.

If theoretical considerations are of any value in questions of political discussion, I would say, that we have good reasons for giving this class of citizens a great share in the public deliberations. Besides what I have already noticed of their habits of considering things in general points of view, and their *feeling* a closer connection with the nation than any other class, I would say that the power and influence which naturally attach to their being called to offices of public trust, will probably be better lodged in their hands. If they are generally selected for these offices, they come to consider them as parts of their civil condition, as situations natural to them. They will therefore exercise this power
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and influence with the moderation and calmness of habit,—they are no novelties to them—they are not afraid of losing them ;—therefore, when in office, they do not catch at the opportunities of exercising them. This is the ordinary conduct of men, and therefore is a ground of probable reasoning.—In short, I should expect from our Gentry somewhat of generosity and candour, which would temper the commercial principle, which seems to regulate the national transactions of modern Europe, and whose effects seem less friendly to the best interests of humanity, than even the Roman principle of glory.

The Reader will now believe that I would not recommend the filling the House of Commons with merchants, although they seem to be the natural Representatives of the monied interest of the nation. But I do not wish to consider that House as the Representative of any Orders whatever, or to disturb its deliberations with any debates on their jarring interests. The man of purely commercial notions disclaims all generosity—recommends honesty because it is the best policy—in short, “ places the value of a thing in “ as much money as ’twill bring.” I should watch the conduct of such men more narrowly than that of the Nobles. Indeed, the history of Parliament will show that the Gentry have not been the most venal part of the House. The Il-

lumination which now dazzles the world aims directly at multiplying the number of venal members, by filling the senates of Europe with men who may be bought at a low price. Ministerial corruption is the fruit of Liberty, and freedom dawned in this nation in Queen Elizabeth's time, when her minister bribed Wentworth.—A wise and free Legislation will endeavour to make this as expensive and troublesome as possible, and therefore will neither admit universal suffrage nor a very extensive eligibility. These two circumstances, besides opening a wider door to corruption, tend to destroy the very intention of all civil constitutions. The great object in them is, to make a great number of people happy. Some men place their chief enjoyment in measuring their strength with others, and love to be continually employed in canvassing, intriguing, and carrying on some little pieces of a sort of public business; to such men universal suffrage and eligibility would be paradise—but it is to be hoped that the number of such is not very great: for this occupation must be accompanied by much disquiet among their neighbours, much dissension, and mutual offence and ill-will—and the peaceable, the indolent, the studious, and the half of the nation, the women, will be great sufferers by all this. In a nation possessing many of the comforts and pleasures of life, the happiest government

government is that which will leave the greatest number possible totally unoccupied with national affairs, and at full liberty to enjoy all their domestic and social pleasures, and to do this with security and permanency. Great limitations in the right of electing seems therefore a circumstance necessary for this purpose; and limitations are equally necessary on the eligibility. When the offices of power and emolument are open to all, the scramble becomes universal, and the nation is never at peace. The *road* to a seat in Parliament should be accessible to all; but it should be long, so that many things, which all may in time obtain, shall be requisite for qualifying the candidate. The road should also be such that all should be induced to walk in it, in the prosecution of their ordinary business; and their admission into public offices should depend on the progress which they have made in the advancement of their own fortunes. Such regulations would, I think, give the greatest chance of filling the offices with persons fittest for them, by their talents, their experience, and their habits of thinking. These habits, and the views of life which a man forms in consequence of his situation, are of the utmost importance.

After all these observations, I must still recur to a position which I have repeated more than once, namely, that our constitution, which nearly

embraces all these circumstances, has attained its present excellence chiefly in consequence of the innate worth of the British character. About the time of the Conquest, our constitution hardly differed from that of France. But the clashing of interests between the different Orders of the subjects was not so rancorous and obstinate—these Orders melted more easily together—the purity of the principle of Representation in the States was less attended to; and while the French Peers gradually left off minding any business but their own, and left the High Court of Judicature to the lawyers, and the King to his Cabinet Council, the Peers of Great Britain, overlooking their own less important distinctions, attended more to the State, became a permanent Council to the Sovereign in the administration and legislation; and, with a patriotism and a patience that are unknown to the other Grandees of Europe, continued to hear and to judge in all questions of justice and property between the inferior citizens of the State. British Liberty is the highly-prized fruit of all this worthy conduct, and most people ascribe it to the superior spirit and independence of the national character. It strikes me, however, as more surely indicating superior virtue, and more judicious patriotism; and our happy constitution is not more justly entitled to the admiration and respect that is paid to it.

it by all Europe, than to the affectionate and grateful attachment of every true-hearted Briton.

Since the publication of this volume I have seen a very remarkable work indeed, on the same subject, *Memoires pour servir a l'Histoire du Jacobinisme, par M. l'Abbé Barruel*. This author confirms all that I have said of the *Enlighteners*, whom he very aptly calls *Philosophists*; and of the abuses of Free Masonry in France. He shows, unquestionably, that a formal and systematic conspiracy against Religion was formed and zealously prosecuted by Voltaire, d'Alembert, and Diderot, assisted by Frederic II. King of Prussia; and I see that their principles and their manner of procedure have been the same with those of the German atheists and anarchists. Like them they hired an Army of Writers; they industriously pushed their writings into every house, and every cottage. Those writings were equally calculated for inflaming the sensual appetites of men, and for perverting their judgments. They endeavoured to get the command of the Schools, particularly those for the lower classes; and they erected and managed a prodigious number of Circulating Libraries and Reading Societies. M. Barruel says, that this gang of public corruptors have held their meetings for many years in the *Hotel d'Holbach* at Paris, and that Voltaire was their honorary President.

fidest. The most eminent members were *d'Alambert*, *Diderot*, *Condorcet*, *La Harpe*, *Turgot*, *Lamoignon*. They took the name of **ÆCONOMISTS**, and affected to be continually occupied with plans for improving Commerce, Manufactures, Agriculture, Finance, &c. and published from time to time respectable performances on those subjects.—But their darling project was to destroy Christianity and all Religion, and to bring about a total change of Government. They employed writers to compose corrupting and impious books—these were revised by the Society, and corrected till they suited their purpose. A number were printed in a handsome manner, to defray the expence; and then a much greater number were printed in the cheapest form possible, and given for nothing, or at very low prices, to hawkers and pedlars, with injunctions to distribute them secretly through the cities and villages. They even hired persons to read them to conventicles of those who had not learned to read *. (See vol. i. 343—355.)

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* The author makes an observation which is as just as it is agreeable. This atrocious gang solicited, with the most anxious assiduity, the participation and patronage of the great ones of the world, and boast of several very exalted names; *Frederic II. of Prussia*, whom they call the *Solomon of the North*, *Catharine II. Gustavus King of Sweden*, the *King of Denmark*, &c. &c. But in the whole series of their

I am particularly struck by a position of Abbé Barruel, "*That Irreligion and unqualified Liberty and Equality are the genuine and original Secrets of Free Masonry, and the ultimatum of a regular progress through all its degrees.*" He supports this remarkable position with great ingenuity, and many very pertinent facts. I confess that now, when I have got this impression, I shall find it very difficult to efface it. But I must also say, that this thought never struck me, during all the time that I have been occupied with it; nor have I ever heard it expressed by any Brother, except such as had been illuminated; and such Brethren always considered this as an innovation or improvement on genuine British Free Masonry. I recollect, indeed, that Nicholai, in his account of the German Rosycrucians, says, that the object of Free Masonry in England, since the time of James II. is *Toleration in Religious Opinions*, as *Royalism* had been the object before that time.

their correspondence there is not the least trace of any encouragement or any hopes from our excellent Sovereign George III. Despising the incense of such wretches, and detesting their science, he has truly merited the title of *Philosopher*, by having done more for the real Illumination of the World, by the promotion of true Science, than Louis XIV. with his pensioned Academicians, or than all the present Sovereigns of Europe united; and has uniformly distinguished himself by his regard for true Religion, and every thing that is venerable and sacred. This omission is above all praise!

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The account which the Abbé gives of the *Chevalerie du Soleil* is very conformable to one of the three rituals in my possession. His account of the *Chevalerie de Rose Croix*, and some others, differs considerably from those in my box. I have reason to think that my materials are transcripts from the rituals, &c. which Rosa introduced into the German Lodges, because the writer of the greatest part of them is an inhabitant of that city.

I think that the Abbé Barruel's account of this matter suggests a pleasing reflection. All the Brethren on the Continent agree in saying, that Free Masonry was imported from Great Britain about the beginning of this century, and this in the form of a Mystical Society. It has been assiduously cultivated in Britain ever since that time, and I believe that the Fraternity is more numerous here, in proportion to the population of the country, than in any other kingdom; yet in Britain the Brethren have never suspected that its principles were seditious or atheistical. While the Free Masonry of the Continent was tricked up with all the frippery of stars and ribands, or was perverted to the most profligate and impious purposes, and the Lodges became seminaries of Foppery, of Sedition, and Impiety, it has retained in Britain its original form, simple and unadorned, and the
Lodges

Lodges have remained the scenes of innocent merriment, or meetings of Charity and Beneficence. As the good sense and sound judgments of Britons have preserved them from the absurd follies of Transmutation, of Ghost-raising, and of Magic, so their honest hearts and their innate good dispositions have made them detest and reject the mad projects and impious doctrines of Cosmopolites, Epicurists, and Atheists.

*O fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint
Anglicos !*

I have more confidence than ever in the sentiment which I expressed in p. 488, as an encouragement for our moral instructors ; and with greater earnestness do I call on them to rescue from corruption and impending ruin a nation so highly deserving of their care.

Mr. Barruel, in the eighteenth chapter of his work, has suggested some reflections, which highly merit attention, and greatly tend to efface the impression which is naturally made on the minds of the unthinking and precipitant, when they observe such a list of authors, whom they have been accustomed to admire, all leagued against Religion. I think, however, that nothing can more effectually remove it, than what I have already shown of the vile and disgraceful tricks which these sophists have been guilty of to support their cause. The cause of this numerous
association

association is distinctly seen in their very procedure. The very first step in their progress is *depravation of manners*. In this they have laboured with as much earnestness as either Spartacus, or Minos, or Bahrdt. It was a treat to me to learn that La Close's abominable book *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, was not merely pandering for his patron Orleans, but also working for his masters at the Hotel d'Holbach. Nothing gives such certain bread to those authors, in the beginning of their career, as immoral and impure writings;—and with such did even their chief set out, and fill his pockets; witness his *Pucelle d' Orleans*; and even after they became the *sages of France*, they continued, either from coarse taste or from serious principle, for the diabolical purpose of inflaming the passions of others, to interlard their gravest performances with impure thoughts and sentiments. Nay, the secret of the Hotel d'Holbach shews us that, for any thing we know to the contrary, the vilest productions of their press may have been the compositions of the octogenary Voltaire, of the sly d'Alembert, or of the author of the *Pere de Famille*. What a pity it is that the *Decline of the Roman Empire* was not all written in England, and that its learned and elegant author, by going into their society, has allowed himself to be drawn into this muddy and degrading vortex!

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I should scarcely ask for more to disgust me with the philosophy of these sages, and to make me distrust all their pretensions to knowledge. The meanness of the conduct suited the original poverty of the whole of them; but its continuance strips them of all claims to the name of philosophers. Their pretended wisdom is only cunning,—and we must acknowledge that their conduct was clever: for this mean of corruption, concealed or embellished by their talents for sentimental slang, (I can give it no better name,) made their conversation and their writings most acceptable to their noble patrons.—Now it is that Religion, of necessity, comes on the field; for Religion tells us, that these are mean pleasures for creatures born to our prospects; and Christianity tells us, that they are gross transgressions of *the only just morality*. The progress of the pupil will now be rapid; for he will listen with willing ears to lessons which flatter his passions. Yet Voltaire thinks it necessary to enliven the lessons by a little of the *salaison, quelques bons mots à-propos auprès des femmes*, which he recommends to d'Alembert, who, it seems, was deficient in this kind of small talk.

Surely all this is very unlike to wisdom; and when we see that it is part of a plan, and this an obvious one, it should greatly lessen our wonder at the number of these admired infidels. If we

would now proceed to examine their pretensions to science, on which they found their claim to the name of philosophers, we must be careful to take the word in a sense that is unequivocal. Its true meaning is by no means what is commonly assigned to it, a lover of knowledge. It is a lover of wisdom; and philosophy professes to teach us what are the constituents of human felicity, and what are the means of attaining it; what are our duties, and the general rules for our conduct. The stoics were philosophers. The Christians are also philosophers. The Epicureans and the Sophists of France would also be called philosophers. I have put in my objection to this claim already, and need not repeat my reasons for saying that their doctrines are not dictates of wisdom. I shall only add, that their own conduct shows plainly that their principles had no effect on themselves, because we see, from the series of correspondence which Mr. Barruel has laid before us, that they do not scruple to practise villanous and hypocritical tricks, which never fail to disgrace a man, and are totally irreconcilable with our notions of human dignity. Voltaire patiently took a caning from an officer at Frankfort, for having wittily told lies of his scholar Frederic, and his wisdom told him that his honour was cleared by offering to meet the Major, each of them provided

vided with an injection syringe. This was thought sublime wit at Ferney. I do not suppose that the slave Epictetus, or the foldier Digby, would have ended the affair in this manner. Many of the deeds of wisdom of the club d'Holbach were more degrading than even this; and I am confident that the whole of this phalanx of sages were conscious that they were treated by their patrons and pupils as Voltaire was treated by the Solomon of the North, and that their notions of the *vraie sagesse* were also the same with his. He gives this account of it in his letter to his niece: "Le Roi lui avoit repondu; 'j'aurai besoin de Voltaire un an tout au plus—On presse l'orange, et on jette l'écorce.' Je me suis fait repeter ces douces paroles"—(How poor Voltaire would grin!)"—"Je vois bien qu'on a pressé l'orange—il faut penser à sauver l'écorce."

But, as things stand at present, philosopher means a man of science, and in this sense of the word our sages claim great respect. No claim can be worse founded. It is amusing to observe the earnestness with which they recommend the study of natural history. One does not readily see the connection of this with their ostensible object, the happiness of man. A perusal of Voltaire's letters betrays the secret. Many years ago he heard that some observations on the
formation

formation of strata, and the fossils found in them, were incompatible with the age which the Mosaic history seems to assign to this globe. He mentions this with great exultation in some of his early letters; and, from that time forward, never ceases to enjoin his colleagues to press the study of natural history and cosmogony, and carefully to bring forward every fact which was hostile to the Mosaic accounts. It became a serious part of the exercises of their wealthy pupils, and their perplexing discoveries were most ostentatiously displayed. M. de Luc, a very eminent naturalist, has shewn, in a letter to the Chevalier Dr. Zimmermann, (published, I think, about the year 1790,) how very scanty the knowledge of these observers has been, and how precipitate have been their conclusions. For my own part, I think the affair is of little consequence. Moses writes the history, not of this globe, but of the race of Adam.

The science of these philosophers is not remarkable in other branches, if we except M. d'Alembert's mathematics *. Yet the imposing confidence

* Never was there any thing more contemptible than the physical and mechanical positions in Diderot's great work, the *Système de la Nature*, (Barruel affirms, that he was the author, and got 100 pistoles for the copy, from the person who related the story to him,) that long ago found that

confidence of Voltaire was such, that he passes for a person fully informed, and he pronounces on every subject with so much authority, with such a force of expression, and generally with so much wit or pleasantry, that his hearers and readers are fascinated, and soon convinced of what they wish to be true.

It is not by the wisdom nor by the profound knowledge which these writers display, that they have acquired celebrity, a fame which has been so pernicious. It is by fine writing, by works addressed to the imagination and to the affections, by excellent dramas, by affecting moral essays, full of expressions of the greatest respect for virtue, the most tender benevolence, and the highest sentiments of honour and dignity.—By these means they fascinate all readers; they gain the esteem of the worthy, who imagine them sincere, and their pernicious doctrines are thus spread abroad, and steal into the minds of the dissolute, the licentious, and the unwary.

that Diderot had assisted Robinet to make a book out of his Masonic Oration, which I mentioned in page 41. Robinet trusted to Diderot's knowledge in natural philosophy. But the Junto were ashamed of the book *De la Nature*. Diderot seems to have, after this, read Dr. Hartley's book, and has greatly refined on the crude system of Robinet. But after all, the *Système de la Nature* is contemptible, if it be considered as pretending to what is received as science by a mechanical philosopher.

But

But I am writing to Britons, who are considered by our neighbours on the Continent as a nation of philosophers—to the countrymen of Bacon, of Locke, of Newton—who are not to be wheedled like children, but must be reasoned with as men.—Voltaire, who decides without hesitation on the character of the most distant nations in the most remote antiquity, did not know us: he came among us, in the beginning of his career, with the highest expectations of our support, and hoped to make his fortune by his *Pucelle d'Orleans*. It was rejected with disdain—but we published his *Henriade* for him: and, notwithstanding his repeated disappointments of the same kind, he durst not offend his countrymen by slandering us, but joined in the profound respect paid by all to British science.—Our writers, whether on natural or moral science, are still regarded as standard classics, and are studied with care. Lord Verulam is acknowledged by every man of science to have given the first just description of true philosophy, pointed out its objects, and ascertained its mode of procedure—And Newton is equally allowed to have evinced the propriety of the Baconian precepts by his unequalled success, *suâ Mathesi facem preferente*.—The most celebrated philosophers on the Continent are those who have completed by demonstration the wonderful guesses of his penetrating

trating genius. Bailli, or Condorcet, (I forget which,) struck with the inconceivable reaches of Newton's thoughts, breaks out, in the words of Lucretius,

*Te sequor, O magnæ gentis decus, inque tuis nunc
Fixa pedum pono pressis vestigia signis.*

*Tu pater et rerum inventor, tu patria nobis
Suppeditas precepta, tuisque ex inclute chartis,
Floriferis ut apes in saltibus omnia libant,
Omnia nos itidem depascimur aurea dicta;
Aurea, perpetuâ semper dignissima vitâ.*

After such avowals of our capacity to instruct ourselves, shall we still fly to those disturbers of the world for our lessons? No—Let us rally round our own standards—let us take the path pointed out by Bacon—let us follow the steps of Newton—and, to conclude, let us seriously consider a most excellent advice by the highest authority:

“ Beware of false prophets, who come to you
“ in sheep's cloathing, but inwardly they are
“ ravening wolves—BY THEIR FRUITS YE
“ SHALL KNOW THEM—Do men gather grapes
“ of thorns, or figs of thistles ?”

THE END.

trading genius, Bailly, or Condorcet, (I forget
 which), struck with the inconceivable teacher of
 Newton's thoughts, breaks out, in the words of
 Lavoisier,

Le sçavoir, O maître, comment il faut
 s'en servir pour en faire un usage
 utile à l'humanité, est le plus grand
 des talents. C'est à vous à nous l'apprendre.
 C'est à vous à nous le faire aimer.
 C'est à vous à nous le faire utile.



After such avowals of our capacity to instruct
 ourselves, shall we still fly to those distributors of
 the world for our lessons? No—let us rally
 round our own standards—let us take the path
 pointed out by Bacon—let us follow the steps of
 Newton—only, to conclude, let us seriously
 consider a most excellent advice by the highest
 authority:

“Depart ye false prophets, who come to you
 in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are
 ravening wolves—BY THEIR FRUITS YE
 SHALL KNOW THEM—Do men gather grapes
 of thorns, or figs of thistles?”

(THE END)

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